

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated January 30, 2009, in which claims 1-12 and 14-19 were rejected. A response to this Office Action is due on or before April 30, 2009. As such, Applicant hereby submits a one-month extension of time petition to extend the deadline up to and including May 30, 2009. Applicant also hereby submits a Request for Continued Examination. Consideration Entry and consideration of the following amendments and remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 12 have been amended to include further description of the present invention. Specifically, claim 1 further defines the "two-stage" method of producing a ceramic article wherein the first stage comprises "casting a slip under pressure...slip being under-deflocculated." The second stage comprises, once the slip has been cast into a deposit, "filtering a separate solution containing a deflocculant through the deposit." Additionally, Applicant hereby submits a declaration on behalf of the named inventor, Thierry Chartier, which asserts that the claimed invention is patentable over the prior art. It is respectfully asserted that, based on the amendments and the declaration, that the application is now in condition for allowance.

Examiner rejected claims 1, 3-7, 9-11, and 14-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by, or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,972,263 (Goodman). Goodman discloses a clay suspension of kandite clay to form a molded article using a traditional molding process.

As to the §102(b) rejection, it is respectfully submitted that Goodman does not anticipate the claims as presented. Specifically, Goodman does not disclose "casting a

slip under pressure into a mold," and the slip is "under-deflocculated," as is claimed in claim 1. Moreover, Goodman does not disclose a two-stage molding process in which, after the slip has been cast into a deposit, a separate solution is filtered through the deposit which contains a deflocculant.

Goodman, instead, discloses a suspension of clay particles which includes kandite clay. Goodman does not disclose a secondary process, such as the filtering step of claim 1 of the present invention. Additionally, Goodman does not cast "a slip under pressure into a mold," and instead teaches against such a process stating that it is too costly and is limited to only specific methods. Col. 2, lines 11-19. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Goodman does not teach each and every element of the claimed invention, as is required by §102(b).

As to the §103(a) rejection, the invention as claimed is also not obvious over Goodman. Similar to the discussion towards §102(b), above, Goodman does not render obvious each and every element of claim 1. First, Goodman does not disclose "casting a slip under pressure into a mold." Instead, Goodman actually teaches away from such a method, stating pressure casting is too expensive and specifies to only certain applications. Second, Goodman does not suggest that the slip, after being cast under pressure into a mold, is under-deflocculated. Third, Goodman does not disclose a two-stage process, where the second stage includes, after the slip has been cast into a deposit, a separate solution being filtered through the deposit which contains a deflocculant.

Moreover, the declaration of Thierry Chartier, attached, provides additional evidence that Goodman does not disclose the claimed invention of claim 1. For example, Mr. Chartier asserts that the suspension of Goodman, including inorganic particles, is different from the claimed invention

which includes a completely separate solution which includes the organic deflocculant. Additionally, Mr. Chartier asserts that one skilled in the art would not take away from Goodman the invention of claim 1 including pressure casting a slip into a mold, the slip being under-deflocculated, and following casting with a filtration of a separate solution.

Thus, it is respectfully asserted that Goodman does not disclose the claimed invention of claim 1, and Applicants believe claim 1 is now in condition for allowance.

As to claims 3-7, 9-11 and 14-18, Applicant believes these are also allowable based on their dependence to claim 1.

Claims 2-7, 9-11 and 14-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by, or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Goodman, as evidenced by Applicant's Specification (Page 3, lines 22-24).

These claims are all dependent upon claim 1. Thus, the arguments above as to claim 1 are also relevant to this rejection. As such, Applicant's respectfully assert that these claims are allowable over the cited prior art by virtue of their dependence on claim 1.

Claims 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Canadian Patent 2124863 (Marple). Similar to Goodman above, Marple also does not disclose the use of a solution. Marple only discloses the continuous flow of a slip into a mold such that the produced parts have graded properties across the thickness of the part. Marple also teaches that two different slips 22 and 24 may be contained in two separate reservoirs 18 and 20.

However, it is respectfully submitted that the two slip streams, from the reservoirs 18 and 20, do not disclose the claimed invention of claim 12. For example, in Marple, the two streams are mixed together prior to passing into the mold. Page 4, line 31 to page 5, line 5; Figures 1A-1C.

In claim 12 of the present invention, however, the two tanks do not both contain a slip. Instead, the first tank contains a slip, and the second tank contains a separate filtration solution containing a deflocculant. Moreover, claim 12 claims that the slip is injected alternately and separately from the solution, and therefore they are not mixed prior to entering the mold.

Therefore, for at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Marple does not disclose each and every element of the claimed invention, as is required by claim 12. Thus, Applicant believes claim 12 to be allowable over the cited prior art. Applicant notes that claim 13 has been cancelled from the application.

Claims 8 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Goodman as applied to claims 1, 3-7, 9-11 and 14-18. Claims 8 and 19 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Goodman as evidenced by Applicant's Specification (Page 3, lines 22-24) as applied to claims 2-7, 9-11 and 14-18.

By virtue of their dependence on claim 1, Applicants believe claims 8 and 19 to be allowable over the cited prior art.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue.

If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that he telephone Applicants' attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which he might have.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

Dated: May 19, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

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